

Inclusive Dyslexia-Friendly Practice

SECTION 1

Striving to achieve Dyslexia-Friendly Practice: Two Approaches

SECTION 2

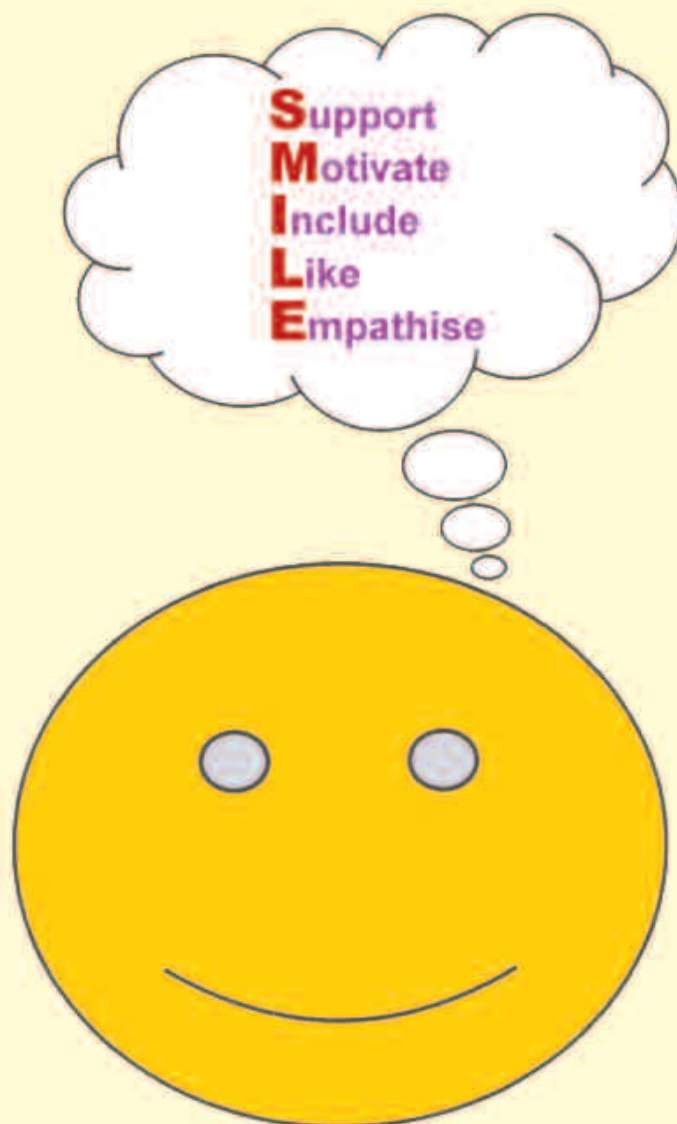
Children with Dyslexia: Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviours

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Special Educational Needs Cross-Border Professional Exchange Programme under PEACE II



**Inclusive
Dyslexia-Friendly Practice**

Foreword

Every day, individual teachers and school staff bring dedication, imagination and skill to their work with children. By sharing these more widely across school communities, we ensure that all children on this island have greater opportunities to achieve to their full potential.

The Special Educational Needs Cross-Border Professional Exchange Programme was funded under Measure 5.5: 'Education, Cross-Border School and Youth Co-operation' of the European Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II). The programme enabled teachers, educational psychologists and other professionals from the border counties of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to build on peace and stability by coming together and exchanging experiences and models of best practice. These participants formed three North-South cluster groups and based their joint programmes of work on the key areas of Autism, Dyslexia and Marginalised Youth, respectively.

Through the project, close links were forged in the field of special education, North and South. The benefits to the whole of the island are many, as the clusters shared and learned from each other's good practice and began to develop their expertise together. These links extended beyond the professional; they increased mutual understanding and respect and have led to the formation of positive and sustainable relationships.

We owe our gratitude, in the first instance, to all those who so willingly gave of their time and expertise to participate in the core work of the project. We are also grateful to the members of the Steering Group, to the Special Education Support Service for its work in overseeing the project, to Seamus McDermott of Monaghan Education Centre, who so willingly gave us a home, and to Andrea Quinn, the Project Manager, whose commitment and enthusiasm added greatly to the success of the project.

This resource, as well as those produced by the other two cluster groups, are the result of a truly collaborative effort and they reflect the wealth of knowledge and experience within those groups. We hope that they will be an invaluable tool to teachers throughout both education systems.

John Hunter

Breandán Ó Murchú

Project Principals

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Steering Committee: SEN Cross-Border Professional Exchange Programme

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Andrea Quinn, Project Manager

Betty Treanor, Project Administrator

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Cluster Participants (Dyslexia)

Rosetta McMahon	St Mary's Boys' National School, Monaghan
Paula Coleman	St Mary's Boys' National School, Monaghan
Martin McGlade	Harberton Special School, Belfast
Sandra Bradford	Harberton Special School, Belfast
Eileen Saunders	Harberton Special School, Belfast
Doris Walker	Harberton Special School, Belfast
Maeve Conlon	St Clare's National School, Manorhamilton
John Conlon	St Clare's National School, Manorhamilton
Tom McCully	Belmont House, Derry
Nuala Begley	Belmont House, Derry
Charlotte Brady	Dromore National School, Donegal
Clare Bryne	Dromore National School, Donegal
Michael McMullen	Dromore National School, Donegal
Mary McGranaghan	Dromore National School, Donegal
Kathryn Bell	Dunclug College, Ballymena
Carrie Lee	Dunclug College, Ballymena
Marie McElvaney	Castleblaney College, Castleblaney
Deirdre McHugh	National Educational Psychological Service
John Finlay	Psychological Services, Southern Education and Library Board
Ann-Marie Casserly	St Angela's College, Sligo
Sandra Smyth	North Eastern Education and Library Board
Helen Nelson	Cottown Outreach Centre, Bangor
Caroline Porter	Cottown Outreach Centre, Bangor
Eugene Toolan	St Angela's College, Sligo
Jackie Lambe	University of Ulster
Marleen Collins	Department of Education, Northern Ireland

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INTRODUCTION

The '**Inclusive Dyslexia-Friendly Practice**' is designed for use with pupils who have dyslexia as well as for teachers and parents who work in this area.

Programme participants from Northern Ireland and the border counties came together to investigate, share and promote best practice for pupils who have dyslexia. They researched the idea of creating an inclusive dyslexia-friendly school with an emphasis on ICT, in order to develop benefits for pupils, teachers and parents alike. This resource pack represents their accumulated work carried out over an eighteen-month period, in mainstream and special education, at primary, and post-primary level and in collaboration with an associated support service.

The participants present two approaches to creating inclusive **dyslexia-friendly schools**. They used the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) standards and the accompanying 'Achieving Dyslexia-Friendly Schools Information Pack'¹ as points of reference. The impact of dyslexia on the emotional development of both the child and his / her family is also presented, with some suggested strategies for addressing the main challenges. The section on improving school and classroom practices includes a number of resources. Practical tips for achieving an inclusive dyslexia-friendly school are included. **ICT software** that supports dyslexia is examined, together with the question of how pupils can use ICT to help their learning.

The toolkit has been created as a practical resource for learning and teaching which can be used in every classroom. Its main aim is to provide some practical tips on strategies that participants have used in their work involving pupils with difficulties arising from dyslexia. Therefore, it includes classroom aids and equipment together with information on how to use them. All of the comments included reflect the participants' personal experiences. A number of **support booklets** have also been designed. Two of these booklets outline strategies for the pupil and his / her parents with regard to the transition from primary to post-primary school.

It is important to note that while the focus of the work is the development of inclusive dyslexia-friendly practice, this resource pack can be of benefit, not just to pupils with dyslexia, but to all pupils.

1 www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dfs.html

SECTION 1

Striving to Achieve Dyslexia-Friendly Practice: Two Approaches

Outlined below are two different organisational approaches to achieving dyslexia-friendly practices.

Approach A: Developing a dyslexia-friendly mainstream school.

Approach B: The Special School for pupils with dyslexia as a Centre of Excellence in itself and as a support for outlying mainstream schools.

Description of Approach A

This approach addresses some of the challenges faced by mainstream schools in becoming dyslexia-friendly. Approach A was devised using the BDS standards and the accompanying 'Achieving Dyslexia-Friendly Schools Information Pack' as points of reference. Creating guidelines for the development of a dyslexia-friendly school requires a great deal of planning. Key elements include Whole-School Consultation, Assessment and liaising with parents and outside agencies. It is also essential to set a specific timeframe for implementation and to identify those who have responsibility for key actions.

Description of Approach B

Approach B is based on four main standards, also drawn from the BDA standards and the accompanying 'Achieving Dyslexia-Friendly Schools Information Pack'. The standards also reflect the excellent work carried out to date in similar existing special provision, north and south.

The four standards:

- **Leadership and Management**
- **Teaching and Learning**
- **Creating a Climate for Learning**
- **Partnership and Liaison**

It is intended that formal adoption of these standards will assist in ensuring continuity, progression and improvement and that which is best for the child will remain the central focus of any intervention or planned strategy. The Centre for the purpose of this document is defined as a service that has a primary function to provide support to pupils with dyslexia, their parents and their schools.

The following templates are designed to facilitate the selection and prioritisation of indicators with some suggested associated actions (for both Approach A and Approach B).

Approach A: Developing a Dyslexia-Friendly Mainstream School

Element	Objectives	Timeframe	Responsibility
The pupil with dyslexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That the pupil is made aware of their difficulties and encouraged to express his / her concerns to appropriate staff ● That the pupil receives support regarding emotional or behavioural issues ● That the pupil is assisted in identifying his / her unique learning strategies ● That the pupil is involved in IEP Planning ● That non-dyslexic pupils are made aware of dyslexia 		
Whole-school consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New staff, substitute and temporary teachers and classroom assistants be made aware of pupils with dyslexia ● Provision is made for training of school staff ● Teachers make provisions in their planning for pupils with dyslexia ● Teachers inform colleagues of any pupils with dyslexia as they pass on their classes, to ensure smooth transition ● Teachers are made aware of and facilitated to attend in-service courses on dyslexia. Arrangements are made to allow / encourage them to attend ● Procedures are in place to aid transition to second level 		

Element	Objectives	Timeframe	Responsibility
Classroom management and organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That all teachers are made aware of possible classroom management strategies in dealing with the pupil with dyslexia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seating position, blackboard writing and alternatives Chalks / markers / pens / pencils, cream paper and font size Peer support and group work, where appropriate Key words / classroom / whole-school labels Classroom language 		
Teaching styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That teachers are made aware of the suitability of their teaching styles and adapt these to suit the particular pupil with dyslexia 		
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That there is a system of assessment in place to initially identify pupils with literacy difficulties and that specific interventions are reviewed periodically That there is regular whole-class monitoring to assess progress and to unearth unexpected difficulties That the pupil with dyslexia is assessed in terms of his / her knowledge rather than literacy ability 		
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That there exist clearly defined classroom intervention and support programmes That suitable learning challenges are set for the pupil with dyslexia That pupils with dyslexia are afforded the opportunities to work in a variety of ability groupings so that lesson content teaching, will be cognitively challenging 		

Element	Objectives	Timeframe	Responsibility
Multi-sensory teaching strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the teacher is made aware of the various strategies that may be implemented when dealing with pupils with dyslexia 		
Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That consideration be given to the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who can read / write homework for pupil at home? Writing down homework Monitoring time spent Presentation format may vary: oral, illustrate, mind maps, outlines, projects, computer use 		
ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That particular attention is paid to the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Software usage Font size / size Screen colour 		
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That consideration be given to varied presentation of writing to include mind maps, spider webs, bullet charts, flow charts, marking system, use of coloured paper / notebooks / copies 		
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the opportunities for shared / paired reading and 'Readalong' are availed of on a regular basis 		

Element	Objectives	Timeframe	Responsibility
Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That resources available for the development of spelling include spellcheckers, magnetic and wooden letters, sandpaper letters and dictionaries 		
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That ample and appropriate resources are made available to each class teacher to support the pupil with dyslexia or Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) 		
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That parents are made aware of school's policy on dyslexia ● That communication between the school / teacher and parents is effective ● That the school notifies parents of concerns regarding possible dyslexia at an early age and that parents are actively encouraged to express concerns and know to whom these concerns should be addressed 		

Approach B – The Special School for Pupils with Dyslexia as a Centre of Excellence

Standard 1: Leadership and Management	
There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
1. Setting of targets to achieve Centre of Excellence status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They are outlined in the Centre's development plan ● Plans are in place for monitoring on an ongoing basis ● They have been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including schools, pupils, parents / carers and board officers ● They are effectively communicated to those stakeholders
2. Policies that address the needs of pupils with dyslexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issues relating to SEN, differentiation and inclusion are addressed ● Learning and teaching are specifically addressed in policies ● Pastoral care is included and stressed ● Subject work is appropriate while materials match reading ability ● Assessment and monitoring are included in policies ● Marking homework is included in policies ● Partnerships with parents is included in policies ● Partnerships with schools is included in policies ● Behaviour, particularly that associated with dyslexia, is included in policies
3. Use of strategies, to assist the pupil with dyslexia to access the curriculum in his / her own school / class setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual teacher's planning includes such strategies

Standard 1: Leadership and Management	
There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
4. Training workshops / information seminars provided for parents and teachers from mainstream schools	Complete as appropriate
5. An annual report on the work and progress of the Centre for school governors and / or managing bodies	Complete as appropriate
6. Planning for continuous professional development (CPD) in specific areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is partnership with other agency staff, e.g. psychology services • All staff are trained to OCR¹ level 4 (or equivalent) and all staff are provided with the opportunity to achieve level 5 • Supply staff are provided with guidelines on dyslexia-friendly teaching / pupils profiles • There is regular Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the context of changing needs

¹ Oxford Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR)

Standard 1: Leadership and Management	
There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
7. The real impact of the work of the Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 75% of pupils show improvement in reading quotient / reading age and spelling quotient / spelling age ● Data is available to show general satisfaction levels from pupils / carers and schools ● Pupils have acquired transferable cross-curricular learning strategies ● Data is available to indicate increase in confidence in how mainstream teachers address the needs of pupils with dyslexia
8. Explicit reference to Centre of Excellence status in Centre's induction procedures for new staff (and supply staff)	Complete as appropriate
9. The commitment of the Centre's management to ensuring that the Centre is adequately resourced	Complete as appropriate

Standard 1: Leadership and Management	
There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
10. The Centre's commitment to supporting mainstream schools to achieve a dyslexia-friendly ethos	Complete as appropriate
11. The Centre's recognition of and addressing the needs of staff, other personnel and parents who may be dyslexic	Complete as appropriate

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning: Support School Improvements for Pupils with Dyslexia

There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
1. Underpinning knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a raising of awareness of class / subject teachers' knowledge of the nature and indicators of dyslexia, strategies for support and how to access available sources of information (e.g. Department of Education (DE) Guidelines, BDA Dyslexia-Friendly Status Guidelines etc.) ● The service is user-friendly and fully accessible to all schools (e.g. publicised 'help desk' with clearly advertised times) ● At least 50% of staff will have gained / be working towards OCR Level 4/5/AMBDA¹ membership or equivalent ● Staff are accessing ongoing CPD that promotes professional competence ● There is provision of ongoing CPD to classroom assistants ensuring that they are seen as valued members of the teaching team who know how to apply support strategies for pupils with dyslexia and also refer back to the classroom teacher and / SENCO for additional / different strategies ● Centre staff are making their pupils aware of the nature of their difficulties, where appropriate, including areas of strength and preferred learning styles ● Classroom teachers are aware of the nature of their pupils' difficulties, including areas of strength and preferred learning styles ● There is a raising of awareness amongst teachers as to the suitability of their teaching styles (e.g. multi-sensory)

¹ Associate Membership of the British Dyslexia Association

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning: Support School Improvements for Pupils with Dyslexia	
There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
2. Assessment and identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is advice and assistance to the school on developing systems and assessment to identify pupils with dyslexia throughout their education with an emphasis placed on early identification and specific interventions ● Systems and assessments that offer further diagnostic information to schools on pupils with dyslexia are available ● Advice to schools on the need to closely monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and targets is provided, and provision is adjusted as necessary ● Pupils' progress and targets are monitored and evaluated by Centre staff, and provision is adjusted as necessary

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning: Support School Improvements for Pupils with Dyslexia

There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
<p>3. Programmes of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a range of clearly defined intervention and support strategies, disseminated to classroom teachers, in use ● Updating of teachers on current intervention programmes and provision of guidance on suitable learning challenges occurs ● There is provision of expertise to meet diverse learning needs, which ensure potential barriers are overcome ● Provision of advice to classroom teachers, that will ensure that they have been made aware of potential barriers to achievement and how best these can be overcome is on-going ● ‘Pen portraits’ on all pupils with dyslexia (to be available to all teachers including supply teachers) that will include individual teaching and learning strategies are provided ● An exemplar of a pen portrait on a pupil with dyslexia for classroom teacher ensuring best practice is provided ● The SENCO and / or Senior Management Team (SMT) are aware that care is taken to ensure that pupils’ cognitive ability is taken into account in any setting or streaming system so that teaching presents pupils with dyslexia with an appropriate level of cognitive challenge ● Class teachers are aware that pupils should have opportunities to work in a variety of groupings – working collaboratively in mixed-ability groupings, with an adult in groups formed on the basis of appropriate, shared literacy / mathematical learning objectives etc.

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning: Support School Improvements for Pupils with Dyslexia

There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
<p>4. Use and provision of information about learning styles in order to enable pupils with dyslexia to learn more effectively in the classroom setting, working in tandem with classroom teachers to provide a continuity of approach, including multi- sensory teaching and learning opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils are taught a range of learning methods, e.g. mind mapping, summarising, questioning etc. ● There is provision for one-to-one, small-group teaching and specialist support, which is dictated by need – literacy, numeracy, concept reinforcement etc. ● Lessons reflect the use of multi-sensory teaching methods and are scheduled with adequate frequency that reflects the IEP ● Work is recorded using a range of formats where possible (e.g. bullet points, story board, flow chart, scribed oral / recorded etc.)
<p>5. Use and provision of information on methods that enable the pupils with dyslexia to learn effectively by recognising their learning styles, reflected in the approach to homework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Separate sheets, scribed into homework diaries or recorded on a dictaphone are provided ● Homework is differentiated, including choice of recording method ● Homework is discussed with pupils and parents

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning: Support School Improvements for Pupils with Dyslexia

There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
<p>6. Appropriate procedures / policies in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marking and assessment will ensure pupils are assessed on the basis of their knowledge (rather than poor spelling). Marking is for success and identifying development and improvement points ● A smooth progression through school, particularly during all transition phases, is ensured ● The development of 'life skills', such as problem solving, decision making, stress management, communication and emotional literacy is encouraged ● The provision of in-house expertise to manage reasonable examination adjustments as well as school examinations and tests is ensured. <p>Provision is made in good time and throughout the school career so that pupils are taught how to use the time and any resources appropriately</p>
<p>7. Provision of advice and guidance to SENCO/SMT to ensure existence of correct procedures / policies</p>	<p>Complete as appropriate</p>

Standard 3: Creating a Climate for Learning for Pupils with Dyslexia

There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
<p>1. Provision of advice by Centre staff on the implementation of access strategies and dyslexia-friendly teaching strategies, with support evidence across all curricular areas</p>	<p>Complete as appropriate</p>
<p>2. Provision of information to class teachers regarding appropriate classroom organisation and adaptive practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration is given to seating, lighting and the position of resources ● Key words are highlighted and resources are clearly labelled ● Information is provided on non-white paper (e.g. cream) with accessible font / layout, where relevant ● Alternatives to copying from the board are provided ● Use of overlays, where appropriate, is supported ● Collaborative learning and peer support is available ● ICT is used to support pupils' learning. Computer screens / font sizes are adjusted where appropriate ● An audit of resources is available within school for supporting pupils with dyslexia, e.g. magnetic letters, ICT software, electronic spellcheck, literacy games e.g. 'goody box'

Standard 3: Creating a Climate for Learning for Pupils with Dyslexia	
There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
3. Promotion of self-esteem permeating all the work of the Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual and his / her diversity is valued • Effort and achievement in all areas is praised • Strengths are promoted • Opportunities for success are provided • A stress-free learning environment is provided
4. Support and guidance available to class teachers to enhance their own ability to address the needs of pupils with dyslexia	Complete as appropriate
5. Existence of effective measures to deal with harassment or bullying	Complete as appropriate

Standard 4: Partnership and Liaison with the Wider School Community	
There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
1. For parents – awareness of, and confidence in, arrangements to meet the special educational needs of their child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective communication is in place for parents to understand dyslexia and the basis on which the Centre teaches and supports their child. This should include reference to the Code of Practice, the Centre systems for keeping parents informed (and vice versa) and, at least, two parent / teacher consultations per year
2. Procedures for notifying parents of concerns and for listening actively to concerns of parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships which contribute to effective learning at home and school are promoted Parents are encouraged to express concerns as they occur Parents know to whom they should address those concerns
3. Active involvement of parents by the Centre	Complete as appropriate

Standard 4: Partnership and Liaison with the Wider School Community

There should be evidence of:	Manifested by fact that:
<p>4. Working in partnership with pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils are involved and are helped to understand their dyslexia. Their achievements are valued ● Help with emotional and behavioural issues is available to pupils ● Pupils are assisted in identifying their own learning strategies and are helped to implement them. Information to mainstream teachers is recorded and disseminated ● Pupils are involved in Individual Education Plan (IEP) planning ● Pupils' strengths, interests and needs are identified and included in their IEPs and in general planning ● A pupil advocacy service, mentors and counsellors is promoted where appropriate ● A 'can do' culture is promoted ● The stigma is removed and role models for pupils are provided

SECTION 2

Children with Dyslexia: Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviours

Introduction

Children with dyslexia often share common problems in the areas of feelings, thoughts and behaviours. To be able to empathise with, and understand the child, it is important to be aware of the effects of dyslexic difficulties on a child's feelings (emotions), thoughts (cognition) and behavioural development, and to be able to identify these effects, when presented. It is critical for the child's development that teachers and parents find ways to support the child in managing these challenges.

However, we often only look at what a child does, e.g. tends not to finish work set for him¹ (poor task completion), finds a variety of ways of avoiding starting a piece of work (task avoidance), or displays poor spelling performance on class assessments or in written work. The most common difficulties for such children arise from the child's emotional reactions to his experiences of failure in the learning environment, and the associated strategies he develops for dealing with these. These reactions can affect the child's thinking strategies, as well as trigger a range of behaviours. The single most common and most powerful negative impact for the child with dyslexia is the denial of the 'thrill of success', which is, in fact, the single greatest motivator towards learning, and the most significant basis on which self-esteem is built.

2.1 Emotional Reaction

The child finds himself being set literacy activities to do, on a frequent basis, many times a day, every week day, for a large part of the year, for many, many years. This usually occurs in a public arena involving people of high emotional significance for the child, i.e. parents, peers and teachers. These very activities are repeated failure experiences. As the child grows older he becomes increasingly aware of how much value adults and peers place on these skills, how much they may affect future life prospects, as well as how disruptive they can be in terms of lesson flow, home life etc.

As a secondary consequence, the dyslexic problem creates stresses for the adults helping the child, of which the child will become increasingly aware. Such experiences can render the child very sensitised to the effects on parents and teachers of such difficulties, manifested possibly as confusion, frustration, and even anger. Consequently, they can become keen and astute observers of the reactions and the passage of thoughts and feelings across the faces of those with whom they are working. In the absence of a breadth of life experience, the child is vulnerable

¹ The personal pronoun 'he' is mainly used in this document for the sake of simplicity for the reader

and highly likely to take on the responsibility for such situations, and to come to feel at fault.

An almost inevitable outcome will be a developing sense of anxiety, which can only become more intense over time, and more deep-seated. High level anxiety is typically a brief experience for most people, and is most usually associated with external indicators such as trembling or shaking, breathing difficulties, and vocal hesitations. However, such a feeling over repeated exposure, with low level and gradual origins, can, over time, become hidden from the observer, and so familiar to the child experiencing it, that he actually comes to see such a state as relatively normal. Hence, there is usually an absence of external signs of anxiety.

Nevertheless, there are outward signs, in the child's learning style, thinking style and responses to activity demands. These changes in learning and thinking styles, and responses to activity demands can be seen as adaptive ways of minimising stresses or anxieties.

A real-life event in the experience of a pupil as observed by an Educational Psychologist (EP) is as follows:

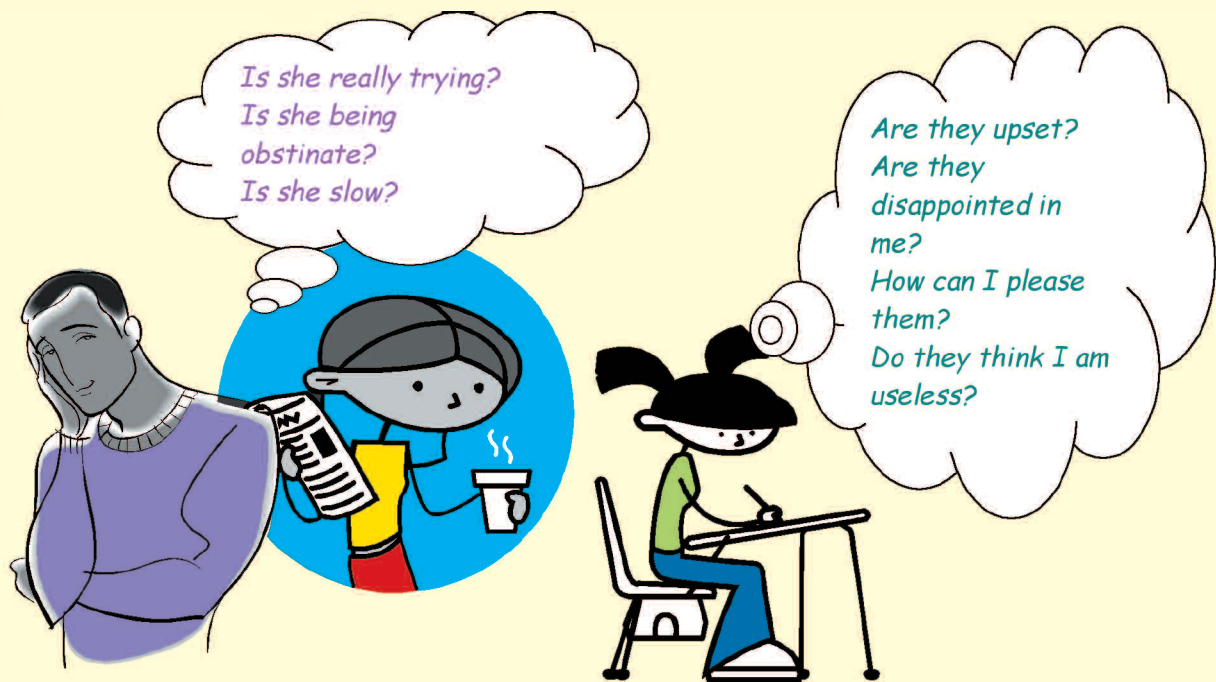
Sharon (15-year-old pupil) had been experiencing severe difficulties all her life in reading and writing. After several interview sessions, she revealed that she worried a lot about how her mother felt about her difficulties. She said she knew that her mother often felt stressed and frustrated by her difficulties.

Her mother had admitted that she found Sharon's problems very difficult to cope with and would get extremely frustrated, and even angry at times. However, she was absolutely convinced that her daughter would not know this, because she was always very careful to hide this from her, for fear of upsetting her.

On further questioning, Sharon said she always knew when her mother was stressed about her efforts to read, because her mother always breathed in and held her breath when she was frustrated or annoyed at her reading attempts.

Sharon had become sensitive even to the sound of her mother's intake of breath.

The following are possible worries that can arise in the family:



It is our job, as education professionals, to ensure that children who are experiencing serious literacy difficulties, do not feel responsible for these or for the interpersonal and practical issues that arise from them. Furthermore, we must ensure that all of the important people in a child's life understand the nature and origin of these difficulties, and can empathise with the child. It is also our responsibility to ensure that these adults know how to minimise the stresses on the child, as well as how to maximise the child's capacity to access the curriculum and learn. Achieving this aim requires work with parents and teachers as well as with colleges of education.

2.2 Follow-on Effects on the Child's Learning Style, Responses to Tasks, and Self-Esteem²

2.2.1 Task-related behaviours

Reluctance to take a guess	The child becomes worried about making mistakes or getting things wrong, or just being unsuccessful YET AGAIN . An adaptive strategy therefore is to avoid the risk of error by avoiding making guesses. Sometimes it is much less painful to fail without effort than to put in a lot of effort and then fail.
Reluctance to re-check work	This strategy helps to avoid the pain, fear and worry of finding that the last effort was incorrect. It also holds the possibility of bringing the activity to an end more quickly.
Distractibility	The child may be highly distractible during literacy activities or activities that require a written or reading response. Such a strategy may be pure avoidance, or may simply reflect a belief that success on the task will not be possible.
Poor listening skills	The child may demonstrate poor listening skills. One possible explanation is that the child finds it hard to listen to instructions because he is worrying about the outcomes of the activity. It is hard to take in information when preoccupied with something else. An everyday example of this, is the common experience of not remembering someone's name when first introduced to that person. This is because you may be anxious about the conversation that will follow, and do not give full attention to the name.
Over-literal understanding	The child may take an over-literal understanding of instructions, especially in interpersonal situations. The child may have become overly keen to please the adult (to avoid displeasing or disappointing the adult), and so learns to do exactly what the adult says. The problem with this is that very few instructions are meant to be taken absolutely literally. Further attempts to explain a way out of the misunderstanding simply leads to greater misunderstanding and frustration for both adult and child. Of course, some children may be naturally literal-minded, irrespective of the emotional context.

² The task behaviours may also serve as useful supplementary 'Indicators' of dyslexic problems.

Immediate 'first impression' solutions in problem-solving tasks	The child may look for immediate solutions, which often lead to superficial solutions. This means that the child does not fully scan the task initially. The child may have developed an absence of a basic expectation of success, which would be necessary for developing the confidence needed to scan, to persevere or to re-check initial hypotheses.
Losing equipment / books	The child may 'lose' essential equipment / books. This can be a good strategy for avoiding the stress of failure experiences by reducing the likelihood of having to do the task, or by reducing the time available for the task. These potential failure experiences are not only embarrassing (which is painful), but can also lead to further loss of self-esteem (which can be even more painful).
Other avoidance strategies	The child may adopt a variety of other strategies, feigning feeling unwell, seeking to go to the toilet, sharpening pencils, finding ways to bring the task to an end quickly (i.e. gives up very easily and quickly), talking to other children etc.

2.2.2 Self-esteem

The child may worry about how other children and adults view him. This may show by way of the child making more negative comparisons between himself and others, 'putting himself down' etc. He may express more doubts about his ability or competence. The child may also seek high levels of reassurance, feedback or attention. Common reactions are 'feeling stupid', 'feeling different' ('I am never picked to do cool things because I can't read or remember things like everyone else'), 'not being understood – confusing dyslexic with stupid', 'feeling embarrassed' (From a survey by South Cumbria Dyslexia Association and Manchester Metropolitan University).

2.2.3 Acting-out behaviour

- **Attention seeking**

The child may seek higher levels of attention, e.g. seeking guidance more often, talking and laughing with others, shouting out answers and not taking turns.

- **Clowning**

The child may seek a role as the class joker or character, by way of obtaining positive feedback from peers.

- **Aggression**

A child experiencing high levels of failure who may, coincidentally, also have poor relationship skills, may resort to aggressive behaviour, especially when frustrated or feeling threatened by a task.

- **Withdrawal**

A child may adopt a strategy of withdrawal or of 'disappearing', in order to avoid the stress of failure experiences.

2.3 Intervention Strategies

There is a wide range of possible intervention strategies for dyslexic difficulties. The following is a small set of possible interventions targeting some of the most common facets of the emotional consequences of dyslexic difficulties.

2.3.1 Teacher-pupil relationship

Possibly the most important aspect of a successful approach to helping the child will be the quality of the relationship between the adult and the child. This needs to be founded on understanding and empathy.

A survey by South Cumbria Dyslexia Association and Manchester Metropolitan University revealed that both primary and secondary pupils place more importance on a teacher's personal characteristics than on the provision of support materials. They rated teachers who get angry, teachers who rush them, teachers who don't encourage them to answer questions, teachers who shout, as 'difficult to learn from'. After analysing comments from dyslexic children about what they found difficult or positive in class, one researcher on the Manchester study concluded: *'It is interesting that the underlying theme is the emotional climate in the classroom, rather than any specific techniques or special methodology. They want calmness and security, the feeling that teachers might actually like them...'* It may be that teachers need to make extra effort to communicate these things to such children. The usual way of communicating these things may not be perceived by dyslexic children as being supportive enough.

The earlier example about a pupil being aware of someone's breathing illustrates just how important tone of voice, facial expressions and body language can be. These things cannot be taken for granted with pupils who are highly sensitive to success and failure. Each learning experience represents a significant extension of trust to the adult. This must be recognised.

Supportiveness, friendliness and nurturance can all be communicated by tone of voice (soft, relaxed, calm) and warm and gentle 'eye contact' (not staring, nor avoiding focus). Frequent encouragement and supportive comments are necessary (always tied in to real efforts or success, and not patronising or false).

2.3.2 Developing the child's emotional communication skills and maintaining integration and relationships with peers

Circle time

If done well, 'circle time' activities can provide safe, nurturing and secure emotional spaces for communication between children. This is a necessary prerequisite for going on to build and maintain positive peer relationships and mutual understanding.

Special time

This is where a teacher contrives to allow a child to spend time with the teacher in a one-to-one context, engaged in a neutral activity, e.g. putting up a class display together, helping to put out equipment for a lesson, helping to tidy the class. This allows time for the child to learn how warm and friendly the teacher is. The activity helps to provide an 'external focus' rather than teacher having to resort to false and strained 'let's get to know each other by talking to each other' context.

2.3.3 Developing a structure for identifying successes and progress

2.3.3.1 Strategy for handling errors / feedback from adults

As mentioned, a child with dyslexia may be extremely sensitive to what he perceives to be errors and failures in his work (in all areas of the curriculum). Therefore how errors are handled or marked is vitally important. It will continue to be important, of course, to provide encouragement for what the child does know, and so a specific strategy for handling errors is very important. This involves firstly, praising effort, drawing attention to the aspects of his 'guess' that were correct, then helping him to focus on where to make an improvement. In this way, mention of 'mistakes' or 'errors' can be avoided, and attention is focused on what he does know. Thus, 'errors' can come to be seen as hypotheses that lead to learning, rather than as failure. This approach also focuses the child's attention on the fact that he has acquired many skills already.

For example, take **Spelling**:

If the child spells 'chair' as 'chere', the word 'chair' has five letters and five positions. This makes ten features, each representing 10% accuracy. The child could firstly be routinely praised for effort, then the child's attention can be drawn to the fact that three of the letters are correct, and two positions are correct, making 50% of this spelling correct. The child can then be asked to focus on the word again to work on the rest of the 50%. Again if the child spells 'black' as 'belak', we note that there are ten features. We praise the effort, draw attention to the fact there are four correct letters and two correct positions, (making 60% correct) and so we can say pretty good. We can then begin to focus on the other aspects, e.g. the child is over-lengthening the sound 'b' to 'be' etc.

In maths, for example, if the child's effort is as follows:

$$\begin{array}{r} 15 \\ -13 \\ \hline 12 \end{array}$$

It may, at first sight, seem that the child is totally confused. However, when we praise effort first we see that the child:

- identified that the task involved subtraction
- subtracted correctly on the 'units' side
- lined the numbers up
- is likely to have begun the problem on the correct side (units side)

Thereafter, the child can be encouraged to re-check, with help from the teacher.

2.3.3.2 Positive thinking strategies

Children experiencing dyslexic difficulties often find that their confidence in *other areas* of the curriculum is also significantly affected. This can have serious 'knock-on' consequences in those areas too, leading to giving up, losing motivation, or just withdrawing effort. The following may help in these circumstances:

Positive self-talk

A child who displays high levels of anxiety related to certain tasks needs to be encouraged to use positive thinking strategies such as positive self-talk to help him overcome any 'emotional blocking' derived from experiences of failure in literacy. Teachers often model this to children by saying things like 'you can do it', 'it looks hard but I know you will be able to work it out'. Adults as role models can also help by talking their way through problem-solving situations, in the presence of the child in order to give him a 'verbal view' of someone else's internal speech process. These approaches will help the child develop good problem-solving strategies, encourage him to come back to a problem that he finds difficult, or to guess and to re-check his work.

Self-monitoring and evaluating

Work with special needs children can be frustrating for both the teacher and the child. Progress is not always clearly evident and can happen slowly over time. For this reason, devising some goals for the child that are achievable and measurable can be important in relation to feedback for both the teacher and the child. Helping children to give themselves feedback by evaluating their own learning can be rewarding for all, and helps promote children's confidence in themselves. It involves the child in the learning process and helps him clearly see the progress he has made. Self-monitoring and evaluating can be done in many ways. Helping children measure their attainments against their own previous attainments, monitoring their spelling progress by either colouring over spellings on a page once they have been learnt, graphing their spelling progress over time are some such examples.

Explaining success and failure

A child who believes there are a lot of things he can't do (as a result of failing experiences in literacy) may be reluctant to try anything new (in other subject areas). He may believe he will fail at the new things as well. To attempt to do something, we need to firstly believe that it is possible for us to achieve it. The way we think about

our competence in taking on a task and the reasons and explanations we have for our success and failure are important. They impact on our self-esteem and the degree of responsibility we will take for our learning. Some ways of explaining success or failure are more helpful than others.

Making external attributions such as attributing success / failure to luck or task difficulty implies that the child has no ability to affect the result because these are factors outside his control. Another unhelpful way of thinking is to attribute failure to a factor which is fixed and cannot change, e.g. 'I don't have the ability to learn something', implies that working hard will have no effect on the outcome and it is useless to even try. The most damaging explanations for failure involve internal, fixed and uncontrollable attributions. For example, following a test (in a non-literacy based area) a child may think that he failed because of his dyslexic difficulties (internal, fixed and uncontrollable).

The most helpful way of thinking in this context is to attribute failure to internal, changeable and controllable factors because this gives the possibility for change and a more positive result in the future. For example, 'I failed because I let my nerves get the better of me', 'by having more confidence I can put more work in'.

How can we as teachers can help children think positively about task performances in areas outside of literacy?

1. Encourage the child to believe he does have some control over his learning.
2. Avoid giving ability-based attributions when talking to children, e.g. 'You are clever,' could be replaced by 'You worked hard.'
3. When a task has proved difficult for a child, help him explain his difficulty by saying that success requires persistence.
4. Challenge any unhelpful reason a child gives for his success or failure and suggest an alternative, e.g. 'I can't do physics, I'm hopeless at it' is challenged by saying, 'No, everybody finds the work you are doing at the moment hard. It's not that you are hopeless. It will just take more practice and explanation.'
5. Sometimes a teacher can help a child by taking the blame for task difficulty, by saying things like, 'No it's not that you are no good at this, maybe I just didn't explain it well enough / maybe I set the questions too hard.'

2.3.4 Helping teachers with their common reactions

It should not be underestimated how stressful a teacher can find trying to help a dyslexic child. Teachers, will not uncommonly, find a child who is struggling with reading to be a significant source of worry and self-doubt. Teachers will often blame themselves for not being able to resolve the child's reading problem. They will

expect too much of themselves, i.e. 'I am a teacher, I am supposed to be able to sort these problems out'. The teacher may, as a result, come to feel invalidated, reacting in any of a variety of ways. Teachers will need help to become 'problem focused', i.e. gauging their success in working with the problem, by the extent to which they can provide the experiences the child needs, rather than by the progress the child makes.

2.3.5 Colleges of education – training

Colleges of education play an enormous role in helping teachers to become skilled in identifying children who experience dyslexic difficulties, and in understanding the emotional stresses faced by such children. Specialised training for student teachers in relation to dyslexia can 'set the scene' for a lifetime of good work in this area.

2.3.6 Parent / 'child as learner' relationship: homework technique for parents

A major emotional focus for a child can be the area of homework. This is often a source of great stress and frustration for both parent and child and has great potential for raising levels of anxiety. The psychodynamics are not hard to analyse. The parent / carer is the principal source of security in the child's life. Any perceived damage to this relationship, justifiable or not, can seriously increase any pre-existing anxiety level. For a school-age child, the parent may only see the child during weekdays for a few hours a day. Half an hour to one hour (or even more in some cases) of this time may be spent doing homework. If stresses run high during this time, the child may be experiencing a significant amount of his time with the parent as stressed or negative. It is not inconceivable that a sensitive and vulnerable child may worry unduly about the effect of reading difficulties on how his parents think or feel about him.

Parents may need help or guidance in how to approach reading at home in a way that does not exacerbate the difficulties, increase anxiety or damage the parent / child relationship. This, in essence, means finding a way to read together that avoids making the errors which are the source of the emotional stresses in the first place.

2.4 My Child with Reading Difficulties: Some Hints for Parents

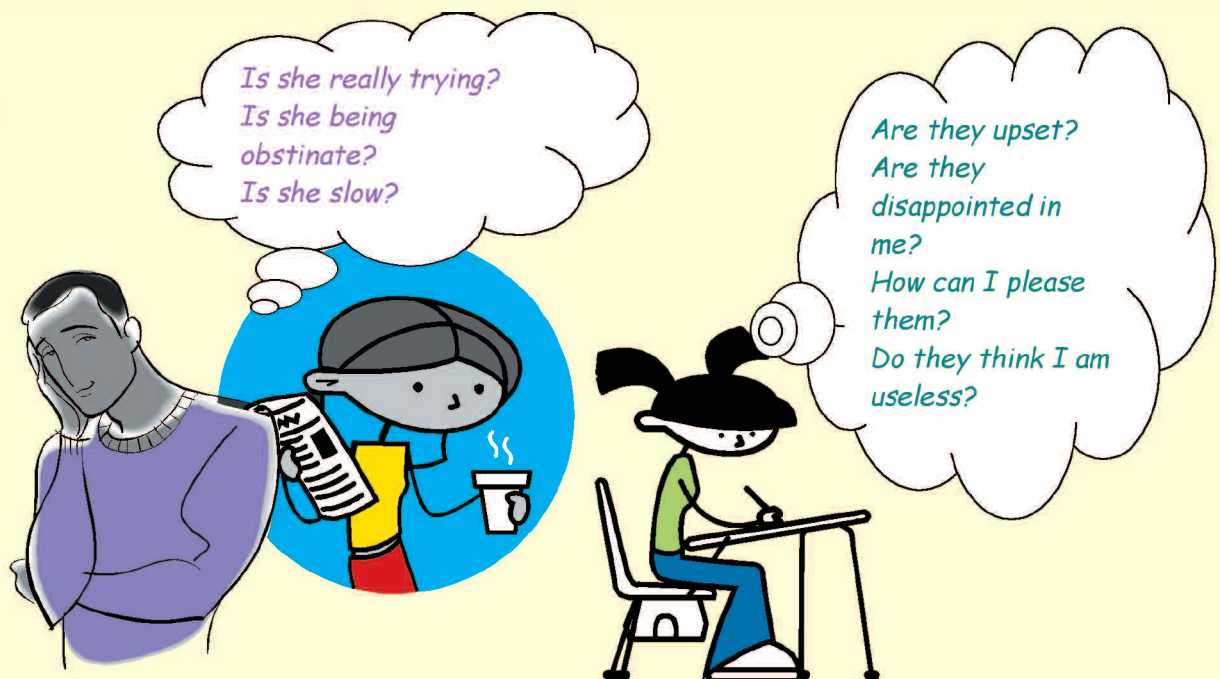
The following information and practical suggestions are designed to try to help parents and their children avoid being exposed to unnecessary stresses with regard to their child's reading difficulties.

Question	Response
Is my child the only one with this problem?	<p>The first thing to realise is that you and your child are not alone in this area of difficulty. Many, many children face this kind of difficulty. For some children the problem is quite small and for others it is a major concern. In some cases it is a source of minor irritation and a little embarrassment. In others, it is a major source of unending frustration and upset, with correspondingly devastating effects on self-esteem, confidence and progress.</p> <p>Reading difficulties have been around for a very long time indeed, in fact, as long as reading and writing have been around! It is a difficulty recognised by all. The reality is that each child has his own unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses in learning to read.</p>
What 'label' should I use for this difficulty?	<p>Although different people / professionals may give the reading difficulty different labels (specific reading difficulty; dyslexia etc), the important fact is that there is a difficulty, and that all those involved with the child need to plan and co-ordinate efforts to help.</p>

Question	Response
<p>Is learning to read just a matter of effort and practice?</p>	<p>Many people often see 'learning to read' as involving only memory skills and practice. In other words, they see 'learning to read' as purely a 'thinking activity'. But this is not strictly true. Learning to read requires certain 'emotional states'. That is to say, reading is best when a person is relaxed and confident. Worries, fears or anxieties about reading can have a devastating effect on learning. Unfortunately, worries, fears or anxieties are not always visible or obvious. In fact, children learn quickly to hide them. Some children have greater difficulty than others in acquiring certain skills, for reasons beyond their control. For example, earlier hearing difficulties could have interfered with the development of sound discrimination skills, making the early stages of reading more difficult. There could also, for example, be a reading problem running through the family history.</p>
<p>What kinds of worries about reading can children have?</p>	<p>Children with reading difficulties can often think of themselves as 'stupid', or 'slow' compared to their peers. This can seriously undermine their self-esteem and confidence in areas where reading skills are required and over time, in other areas too. They may make many more mistakes in their reading, and other work, than their peers. They may worry that this will be a source of disappointment, worry and upset for their parents. They may worry that teachers, friends and parents will think they are lazy or just not trying hard enough.</p>

Question	Response
How can these worries affect a child's learning?	<p>Anxieties about failure tend to 'narrow' thinking skills. They tend to make a child very self-conscious, forcing them to think only of one thing at a time. This can be disastrous for reading because it is a skill that requires lots of things to happen at the same time. The child may forget things from one moment to the next. This can be because his attention or focus is misplaced due to anxieties about failure, stopping normal memory rehearsal, and affecting short-term memory.</p> <p>Worries about failure may also motivate a child to minimise or avoid these worries by becoming reluctant to start, by 'losing books', by suddenly becoming chatty about anything and everything, by offering to do housework, by 'feeling unwell', etc. These can be signs of high levels of discomfort, but can easily be misinterpreted as 'laziness'. The child may also start to guess wildly when in difficulty. This would be because he thinks any guess is better than none, and at least this gives some percentage of a chance of success.</p>

Worries that may arise in families



What about your feelings as a parent?	How can I help reduce my own worries and help my child increase in confidence?
<p>You may find it baffling, frustrating, exasperating and even heartbreaking to watch your child struggle with reading.</p> <p>You may wonder is your child just lazy or ‘deliberately obstructive’.</p> <p>You may find it difficult not to correct or interfere.</p> <p>You may find it difficult to avoid getting upset or even angry and it may be difficult to hide such emotions from your child.</p>	<p>Recognise that your feelings are natural.</p> <p>Learn more about your child’s difficulty and that will help you to cope.</p> <p>Learn to recognise the signs of anxiety.</p> <p>Give your child more control by allowing him to choose his own books and by getting ready for reading by himself.</p> <p>Help your child to relax by making the reading a pleasant time, by talking about the story, introducing humour, and making connections between the story and your child’s experience.</p>

SECTION 3

Improving School and Classroom Practice

3.1 Tips for Inclusive Dyslexia-Friendly Practice

TIP 1 Use coloured chalk and markers for board work

TIP 2 Write alternate lines in different colours on black / white board or use two colours and alternate between these

TIP 3 Number each line clearly or have the board lined with numbers at either end.

1.	Name the characters in the story?	1.
2.	Describe the inside of the well?	2.
3.	Who fell into the well?	3.
4.	What did the goat do?	4.
5.	Why do you think the fox fell into the well?	5.

TIP 4 Introduce cream-coloured paper instead of white

Some pupils with dyslexia find it difficult / uncomfortable to read black print on white paper. Letters can start to blur and move on the pages. This has been described as white 'rivers' appearing in the text. This is why we recommend cream / off-white / coloured paper or coloured transparencies.

Cream / off-white paper may be more costly to produce and schools find it more expensive to purchase. To overcome this, join with other schools when ordering, and buy in bulk. Some companies are willing to negotiate special deals for larger orders.

Print all notices, handouts and tests on the cream / off-white paper. Using only cream / off-white paper also eliminates the practical difficulties which can occur when distributing the sheets in the classroom – who gets the 'special' paper and who does not!

TIP 5 Use coloured transparencies

Coloured transparencies may be placed over plain white paper to assist pupils with dyslexia in reading. It is advisable to try a number of colours and allow the student to choose the colour that suits best.

TIP 6 Prepare keywords

As the name suggests, keywords are the relevant vocabulary pertaining to each subject. Learning keywords before introducing a new topic reduces stress and anxiety associated with reading new material.



- Use flash cards
- Use word mats
- Use labels (equipment, rooms, subject-related words)
- Use PowerPoint
- Use keyword posters

TIP 7 Train pupils in the use of mind maps / concept maps / spider webs

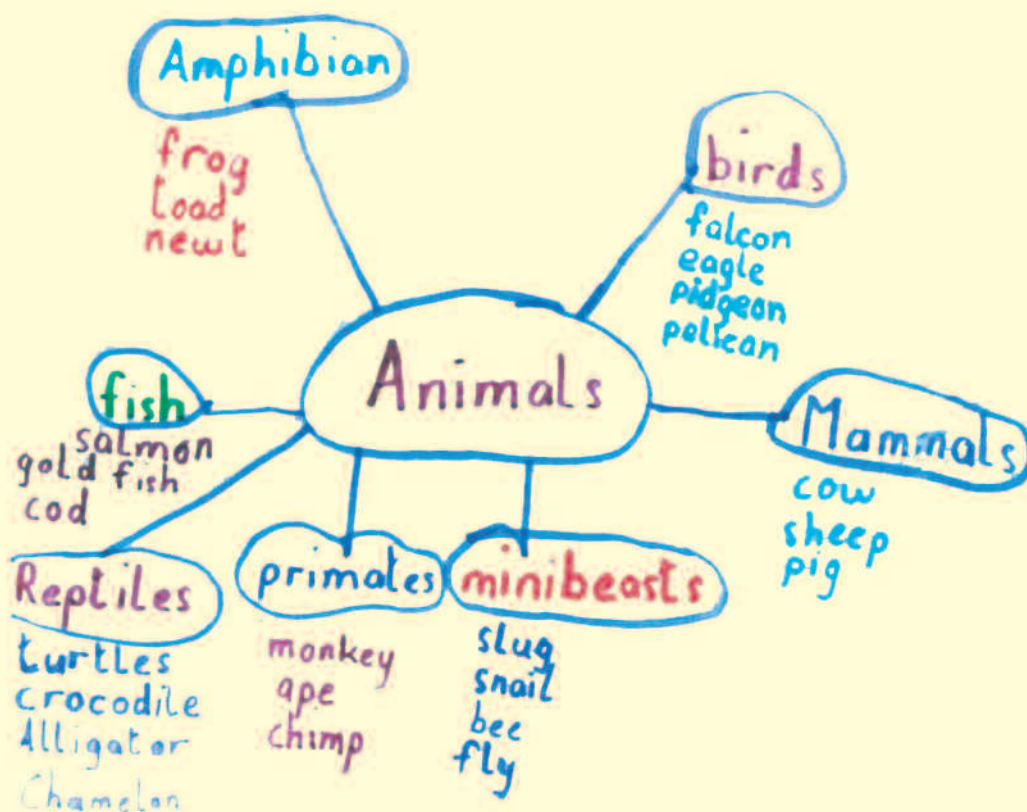
Dyslexia-friendly learning methods for class and homework include the use of the following:

- Mind maps
- Concept / spider webs
- Bullet points
- Flow charts.

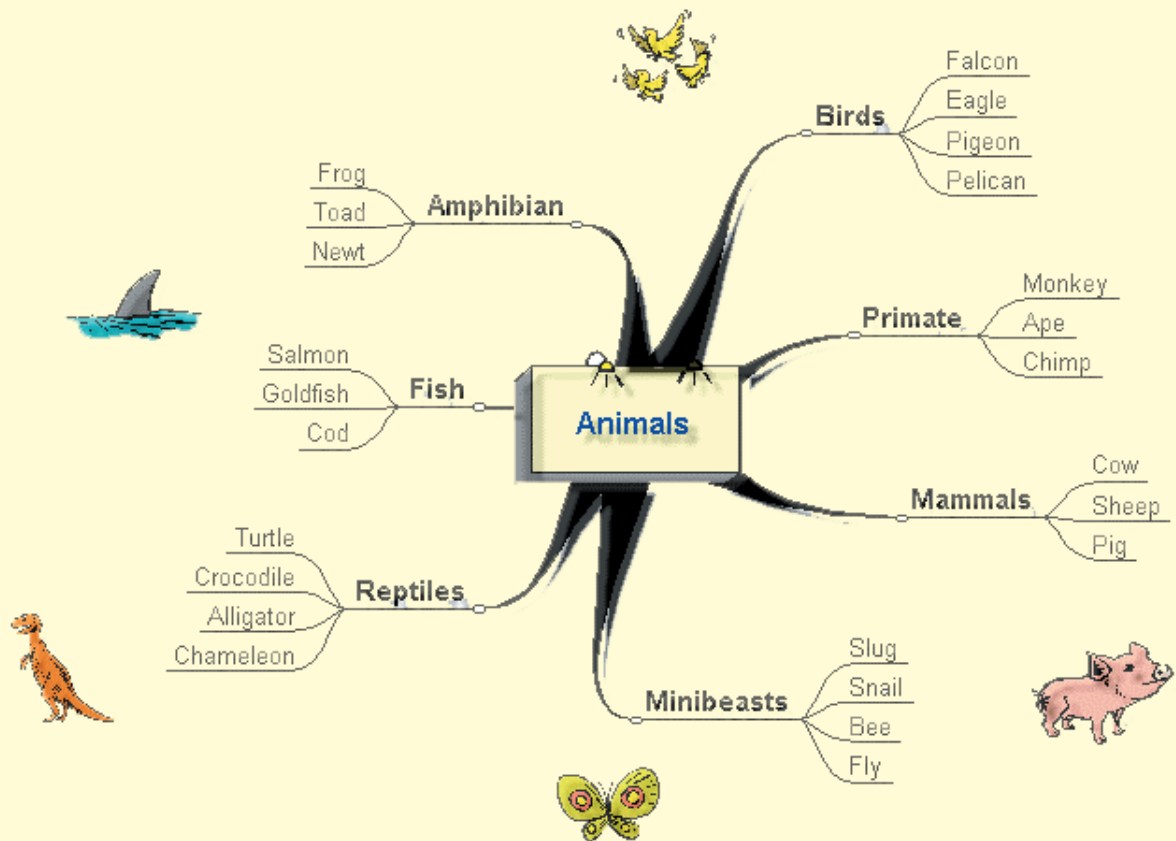
These methods are dyslexia-friendly and are ideally suited to planning out a piece of writing or revising something you need to remember or learn.

Start off with a central image and add branches as they occur. Use keywords, colours and images to help pupils absorb and remember the information.

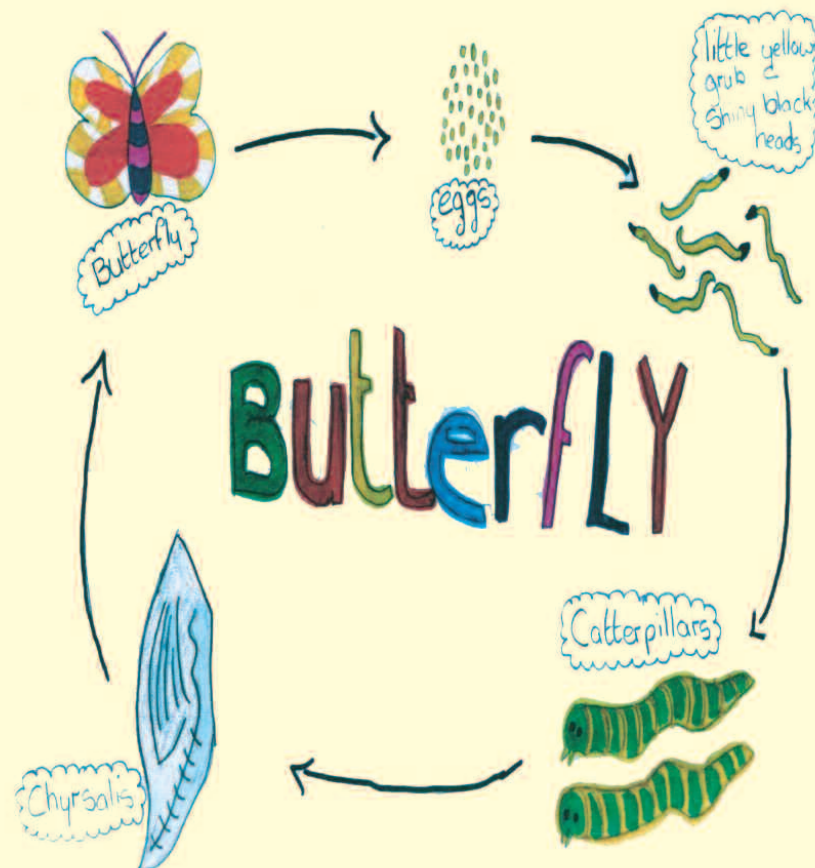
A Pupil's Mind Map



Computer Mind Map



A Pupil's Flow Chart



Resources for developing mind maps / spider webs

- Mind Maps for Kids, by Tony Buzan, ISBN 0-00-719776-4
- Removing Dyslexia as a Barrier to Achievement, by Neil McKay, ISBN 190384203-4

Computer Programs for mind mapping include Kidspiration, Inspiration and Mind Genius.

TIP 8 Use multi-sensory methods

There are many pathways for learning. Each pupil has a preferred learning style therefore teachers should try to include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic methods in their teaching.

Read the work – (visual)

Write it – (kinaesthetic)

Say it – (auditory)

Summarise it – this introduces thinking skills.

TIP 9 Use approaches such as 'Readalong'

'Readalong' is a very simple but extremely effective reading initiative that is suitable for all ages and class groups, primary and secondary. Whilst it requires some initial organisation, once it is up and running, it is very straightforward and user-friendly.

How it works

A. Planning

In order to operate Readalong each pupil requires the following:

- *Walkman* (audiotape or CD). It is advisable to allocate a specific Walkman to each pupil, number it and note accordingly.
- *A selection of books* – many of major book companies now publish up-to-date titles in book form with accompanying tape or CD.
- If desired, pupils may be given a Readalong folder where they can keep an account of all the books they have read and reviews of each, if appropriate.

B. Operation

- Each pupil is allowed to choose a book from a selection appropriate to his / her individual reading skills / age.
- The pupil listens to the tape / CD as he / she reads text silently.
- At the end of the class, the pupil takes note in his/her folder of the page and place on the tape / CD for the following day. It is important to ensure that no other pupil interferes with tape / CD in between lessons.
- If suitable, when a book has been read, a simple book review may be completed to encourage writing skills.

Points to note

It may be advisable, if doing Readalong for the first time, to purchase books on CD rather than audiotape. If using audiotapes, check that your Walkman has a

rev counter so that pupils may easily find where they were if the tape has been used by someone else.

Some of the more advanced packs also have a workbook attached and these can be used very successfully in conjunction with Readalong.

TIP 10 **Introduce Paired Reading / Paired Maths**

Both Paired Reading / Paired Maths / Paired Spelling are powerful techniques and invaluable supports for all pupils including pupils with dyslexia.

Paired Reading can be approached in a variety of ways, but always involving the core principle of simultaneous reading aloud.

In the home the fluent reader / leader can be a parent / guardian, grandparent or another family member. In school, thoughtful, sensitive pairing between junior and senior pupils can be very rewarding and a beneficial experience for both.

Paired Maths programmes using games, can be organised for both home and school use, adopting similar arrangements and approaches as used in Paired Reading.

Appropriate mathematical games can be sourced and provided to pupils to support them in their acquisition and development of basic numeracy skills. In Paired Maths, the emphasis is on fun and games and, for the pupil, the rediscovery of maths as an enjoyable subject.

Paired Reading / Maths resources

[Paired Reading, Spelling & Writing](#), The Hand Book for Teachers and Parents (Cassell) Keith Topping

[Paired Maths Handbook](#): Keith Topping & Judi Bamford: David Fulton Publishers
ISBN – 185346-497-X

[Games and Activities with Dice](#) – Claire Publications

Playing Card Games (Ann Wrigley) Claire Publications www.clairepublications.com

Useful sites for maths games:

www.primarygames.co.uk

www.primaryresources.co.uk

TIP 11 **Consider seating position**

Seat the pupil in a position where you can give help easily, minimising embarrassment. The pupil should face the front of the room so he / she can easily see the teacher and the board. The mid-front of the class can be a good position.

TIP 12 Concentrate on positive marking

Positive marking



When marking a pupil's work it is important to try to do so in as positive a way as possible. Try to concentrate on what is correct. It is soul-destroying for a pupil to be handed back a script which is covered in red marks. (Research has found this to be of very little educational benefit.)

Some useful hints for correcting

Minimise the amount of mistakes you highlight – concentrate on **THREE** mistakes and give **TIPS** on how to avoid these in the future.

Acknowledge **THREE** successful / positive aspects of the pupil's work.

TIP 13 Differentiate homework

Homework strategies

A reader and / or scribe can help. Allow a parent, sibling or peer to read and / or scribe homework for pupil.



Check:

- that homework has been copied down correctly
- that homework is given out before the end of the lesson
- that plenty of time is allowed to write down homework
- that pupils show you that they have written down their homework.

Modify homework:

- reduce length and number of pieces of work
- avoid unnecessary writing of questions
- set a maximum time to be spent on each subject
- ask parents to monitor and record time spent on homework in journal
- have pupils time themselves and draw a line across the homework page at the end of the specified time.

Modify homework format:

- try oral or audio taped homework
- allow use of mind maps, illustrations, projects
- allow homework to be done using a computer.

Tip

Tip use
we're for
we are

Lippi were here Rodge shawthet startling
chain who had been doing in the back
cat

Success Good
opening paragraph

success

Shoren add his eyes and stared out of the
window at the funniest little farm house
he had ever seen. Its set right near
a top of a steep grassy hill and its
rusty iron roof sagged in the middle making
its look old and tired

Tip

Think

Think do
you need to
use commas
in these
sentences?

Rods grandpa had invited the two boys
to stay for a week at his farm during their
school holidays and at first Shoren had
been keen to go. Now he wasn't so ~~sure~~ sure
what ~~are~~ they going to do all the way out
here in the middle of nowhere for a whole
week. No tv no computer games no park
to play in it could turn out to
be really boring. Still Rods been excited
enough for both of them.

Tip use
'their'
for belong-
ing to them
'they're' for
they're for
they are

Success Good use
of paragraphs

success

success

Good story, well done. Please look at the tips
and try not to make these mistakes.

3.2 ICT Software Programs Supporting Dyslexia

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the technology required to access and handle information and to aid communication. All pupils should be given opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capability through the use of ICT tools to support their learning. Using ICT can help in the initial learning process and can also be used to provide lifelong support strategies.

A modern computer provides a multi-sensory environment where sound and images can be used to supplement the written word and calculations. Other items of technology can also be supportive, such as a hand-held tape or minidisc recorder, a portable spellchecker, a digital camera or a scanning pen.

A school may wish to assemble an ICT toolkit that can be used to assess the needs and support their students with dyslexic tendencies. A starter kit should include:

- an up-to-date computer with a sound card
- access to the Internet and email
- printer
- selection of support software on the computer that allows multimedia feedback
- word processor
- database for storing references / contacts.

Acquiring literacy skills is usually the key priority for these students. Carefully chosen support software programs can help students with dyslexic tendencies in all areas of literacy (and numeracy). On basic word-processing, adjustments to font size, spacing / paragraph and screen background can make a difference to a child with dyslexia.

Change font and style	Change spacing / paragraph	Change screen background
Go to format Click on font (Comic Sans & Arial) Click on Comic Sans / Arial Click on regular Click on preferred font size Click OK	Go to format Click on paragraph Change the line spacing to 1.5 or double Click OK	Go to format Click on background Click on the colour you want the screen to be Click OK

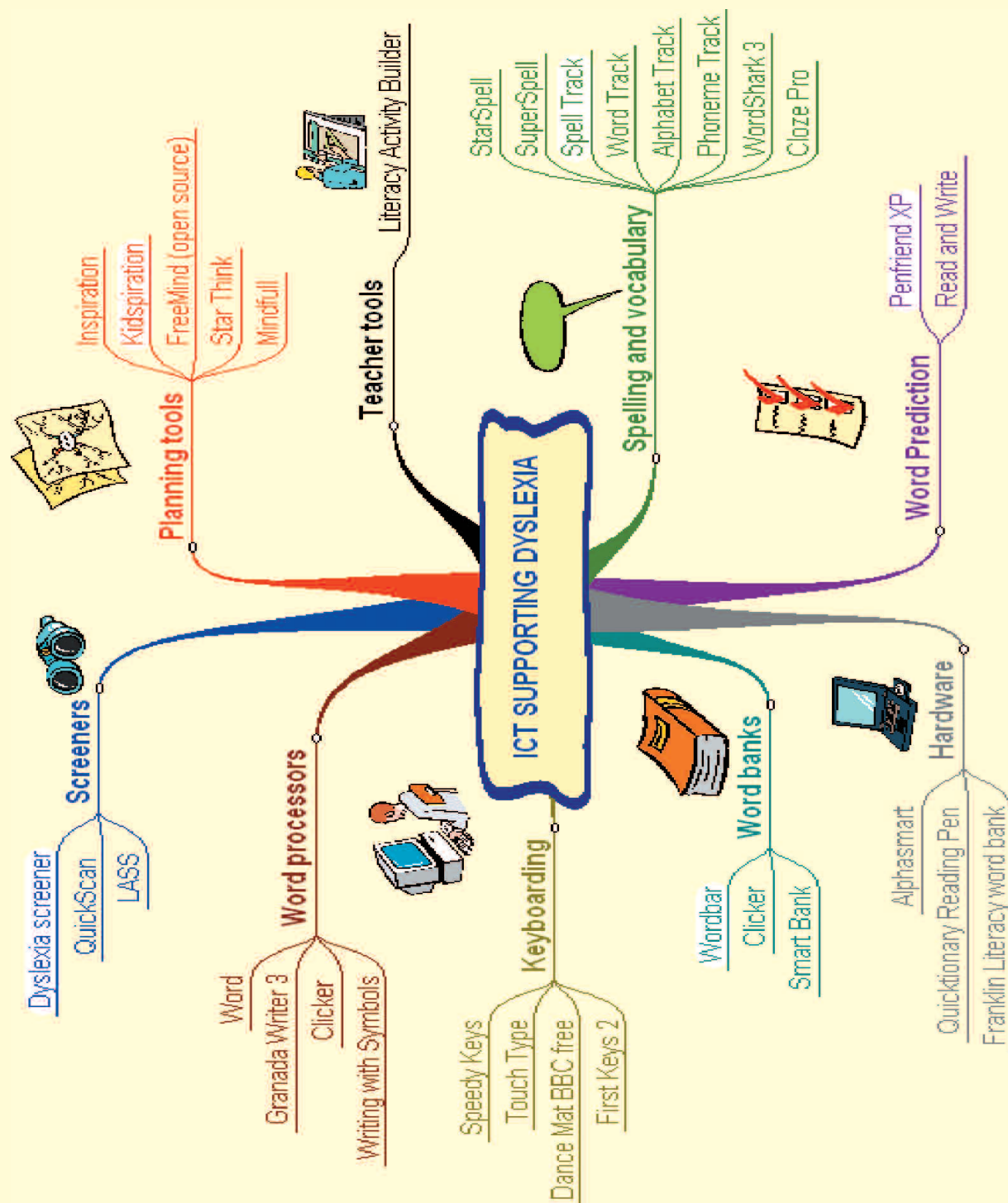
The use of software programs can offer opportunities for those with dyslexic tendencies to work independently and successfully. Using appropriate software programs can provide opportunities to revise, to practise and learn new skills. Good programs should provide an environment that can offer support and practice on a regular basis. However it must be stressed that no software program can replace a skilled specialist teacher.

The teachers involved in this project compiled the following list of resources and suppliers of software (North and South) that we find useful in supporting students with dyslexia in our classes (Appendix 2). The list of suppliers is not exhaustive. It should also be remembered that whatever software benefits the student with dyslexia will also benefit all other students in the classroom.

It is important to select these software programs carefully, so they meet the students' needs. Consequently, the project participants sought to evaluate some of these software packages in a collaborative way. The following seven software packages were chosen for consideration:

- Phoneme Track
- Wordbar
- Kidspiration
- Literacy Activity Builder
- Young Writers Workshop
- Dyslexia Screener
- Penfriend XP

A selection of the software programs available to support students
with dyslexia tendencies



Software Evaluation – Phoneme Track	
Name of Publisher: SEMERC	
Title of the Software: Phoneme Track	
Age range: 5-7 yrs	Level (Primary or Post-Primary): Primary
Educational Value: What goals and objectives will this software help the student obtain? Development of phonetic skills and awareness.	
How does the program tie into the curriculum? Improves literacy skills – it doesn't (<i>one person's view</i>).	
How does it improve teaching and learning? Breaks the lesson down into small steps – spelling.	
How does the program help the teacher? Helps the SEN teacher develop goals for IEP.	
Content: Can the software be individualised for different learners? Yes	
Is the presentation of information appropriate for students with dyslexia? Yes – good graphics – child friendly – ‘cartoon’ voice – nice for younger children – clear voice	
Is the level of language appropriate? Yes – for primary only – clear instructions	
How difficult is it for students to work independently with the software? Pupils can work independently – immediate feedback.	
Any drawbacks? Or other comments? Please continue overleaf if necessary. It is a computerised version of the PAT programme and would not suit pupils at post primary level – wonderful to use with an interactive white board – would be interested to see the other programmes in the series especially Spell Track.	

Software Evaluation – Wordbar

Name of Publisher: CRICK

Title of the Software: Wordbar

Age range: 9+

Level (Primary or Post-Primary): Both

Educational Value:

What goals and objectives will this software help the student obtain?

Support for writing – improves sentence structure and creative writing – improves punctuation and more complex sentence structures – spelling – structured writing – writing goals in any subject – independence and confidence – to write stories and essays without the worry of having to look up spellings – speed up the writing process – accuracy.

How does the program tie into the curriculum?

Improves writing skills – cross-curricular a huge advantage – good for keywords in all subjects – use for procedure frames.

How does it improve teaching and learning?

Gives keyword and phrases – essential for the student with dyslexia to proceed – scaffold for writing – pre-teaching specific vocabulary – creative writing – grammar and syntax in English.

How does the program help the teacher?

Allows the teacher to build in support for independent writing – gives key words and phrases – teacher can make their own grids for specific topics – reduces pupils dependence.

Content:

Can the software be individualised for different learners?

Yes – very easily.

Is the presentation of information appropriate for students with dyslexia?

Yes, but some learners may need some help – no icons / pictures with the word grids to help comprehension and inferential reading.

Is the level of language appropriate?

Not difficult – can work at any level.

How difficult is it for students to work independently with the software?

Not difficult but it would help if there were icons with the words – lots of guidance is needed initially. (Note: the purpose of Wordbar is to move user on from Clicker which is why there are no icons. If the user needs icons he should use Clicker).

Any drawbacks? Or other comments? Please continue overleaf if necessary.

Specific to word grids and not paragraph and essay format – can access specialised vocabulary for different subject areas through www.learninggrids.com – very similar to Clicker but more suitable for older pupils – post primary.

Software Evaluation – Kidspiration

Name of Publisher: Tag Learning Limited

Title of the Software: Kidspiration

Age range: 10 +

Level (Primary or Post-Primary): Both

Educational Value:

What goals and objectives will this software help the student obtain?

Organised thinking process – presentation of work – learn how to design mind maps – good for revision – very visual tool.

How does the program tie into the curriculum?

Useful for ordering skills – sequencing – might encourage less motivated pupils to write - organisation of existing and new material and knowledge – could tie into all areas of the curriculum – good for revision.

How does it improve teaching and learning?

Enhances pupils work – helps to organise the information to be imparted – stimulating / motivating resource – interactive element involves discovery learning – it's fun.

How does the program help the teacher?

It encourages the pupils to put their thoughts on paper using pictures and keywords – teacher could use mind maps as a template for pupils to fill in their own ideas.

Content:

Can the software be individualised for different learners?

Marginally – pupils can choose their own style – can be as simple or as complex as the learner wants.

Is the presentation of information appropriate for students with dyslexia?

Yes, for some, but can be of limited use to those with phonological deficits – software too difficult to use – pictorial layout useful and supportive.

Is the level of language appropriate?

Yes.

How difficult is it for students to work independently with the software?

Probably not so difficult for older pupils once they have mastered its use – quite challenging – a lot of teacher support needed initially – too busy – too much functionality.

Any drawbacks? Or other comments? Please continue overleaf if necessary.

Over-complicates with excessive functionality – more useful to teacher than children – perhaps mind maps as a pen and paper exercise would be more beneficial and less time-consuming – more suited to post-primary – limited by the knowledge base of the students.

Software Evaluation – Literacy Activity Builder

Name of Publisher: BlackCat

Title of the Software: Literacy Activity Builder

Age range: 4 – 11 +

Level (Primary or Post-Primary): Both

Educational Value:

What goals and objectives will this software help the student obtain?

Literacy skills development – improve vocabulary and punctuation – phonological awareness – spelling – close – sequencing – word search – whatever goals the teacher sets.

How does the program tie into the curriculum?

Cross-curricular – encourages students to work independently – multi-sensory tool
Can be adapted to all subjects.

How does it improve teaching and learning?

Motivating and immediate feedback for pupils – fun – activities suitable for specific problems and activities – the best teacher tool ever – teachers can create professional looking programs on any topic in minutes – engaging for the child – empowering for the teacher – could be used in ‘over teaching’ and ‘over learning’.

How does the program help the teacher?

Teacher can make it relevant to their specific teaching goals – wonderful teachers’ tool.

Content:

Can the software be individualised for different learners?

Yes – highly individualised.

Is the presentation of information appropriate for students with dyslexia?

Yes – highly visual and user friendly – immediate feedback.

Is the level of language appropriate?

Yes – the language can be differentiated as the teacher inputs the language / vocabulary.

How difficult is it for students to work independently with the software?

Pupils can work independently and can create their own activities – it is so easy for the pupils to use.

Any drawbacks? Or other comments? Please continue overleaf if necessary.

Excellent resource – extremely helpful for teachers – no need to have the software at home – can upload the resources to the school website – can be used for any language – no sound as yet – comprehension exercises should be included – expensive – danger of being used to produce unfocused low grade ‘worksheets’ but similar applies to most software and indeed paper publications – superb – every teachers dream – would be interested in an add-on for ‘Comprehension’ – can be used with an interactive whiteboard.

Software Evaluation – Young Writers Workshop

Name of Publisher: Granada

Title of the Software: Young Writers Workshop

Age range: 4 – 13+

Level (Primary or Post-Primary): Both

Educational Value:

What goals and objectives will this software help the student obtain?

Good for the writing process but lacking in correction facility – ability to write in a range of styles for a variety of purposes – independent writing – assist and support creative and functional writing – useful as a writing tool for only a small number of pupils with dyslexia – provides a student with good ideas as a starting point in the writing process.

How does the program tie into the curriculum?

Good for the more independent writer – functional writing genre in English – creative, newsgroups, media, captions.

How does it improve teaching and learning?

Seems of limited use in teaching as such – may suit home learner – exposes pupils to a variety of writing genre.

How does the program help the teacher?

Additional resources available in the teacher's toolbox (photos, video clips) to support writing – could help less motivated pupils to write – more able students can work ahead on their own.

Content:

Can the software be individualised for different learners?

Not really.

Is the presentation of information appropriate for students with dyslexia?

Highly visual but a bit immature – can't change font size or style – no spellcheck or spelling prompts – would be more useful for students who do not have a spelling difficulty.

Is the level of language appropriate?

Limited.

How difficult is it for students to work independently with the software?

Initial teacher support required – depends on the learner – doesn't encourage independent work in that it isn't self-corrective and involves teachers' feedback and instruction.

Any drawbacks? Or other comments? Please continue overleaf if necessary.

Visuals are very good but would require a high degree of independence, keyboard skills and a degree of spelling ability – would suit very few children with dyslexia – no immediate feedback for students – can't insert own graphics or videos – overload of study hints.

Software Evaluation – Dyslexia Screener

Name of Publisher: Granada

Title of the Software: Dyslexia Screener

Age range: 5 – 16

Level (Primary or Post-Primary): Both

Educational Value:

What goals and objectives will this software help the student obtain?

Identify particular deficits in specific areas of spelling, word syllables – as a screener – indicator of dyslexia tendencies – unsure, but would like to try it!

How does the program tie into the curriculum?

Doesn't really tie into the curriculum – as a diagnostic tool – looks at phonological skills, e.g. syllable counting, spelling skills, visual processing and language-based activities.

How does it improve teaching and learning?

Informs the teacher of strengths and weaknesses – specific target areas to develop IEPs – understanding of difficulties and the beginning of improvement.

How does the program help the teacher?

Teacher can make it relevant to their specific teaching goals – provides guidance for planning and intervention – could be useful as a battery of tests / assessments.

Content:

Can the software be individualised for different learners?

Yes, for different ages but not necessarily for different learners – it produces a record for each learner.

Is the presentation of information appropriate for students with dyslexia?

Wonder about the font size and graphics for younger children – presentation seems very clear – the graphics could be more colourful – screen is very busy at times – yes, visual and oral.

Is the level of language appropriate?

Some of the language in the reading section is complex and multi-syllabic which could be difficult for the student.

How difficult is it for students to work independently with the software?

Reasonably OK but would have difficulty with the reading – primary pupils would need support and supervised administration of test.

Any drawbacks? Or other comments? Please continue overleaf if necessary.

Readability questionable due to standardisation scores listed – graphics and sound need improving in some places – easy administration – useful as a screening tool to highlight areas of need – some query regarding its practical use, are there studies to support usage? – there is a place and a need for this software in the general area of dyslexia screening.

Software Evaluation – Penfriend XP	
Name of Publisher: Penfriend	
Title of the Software: Penfriend XP	
Age range: 7 +	Level (Primary or Post-Primary): Both
Educational Value: What goals and objectives will this software help the student obtain? Helps spelling, confidence and speed in composing text – assists writing and spelling – freedom to create stories and pieces of writing without constantly having to ask for spelling help.	
How does the program tie into the curriculum? Cross-curricular – encourages students to work independently – can be adapted to all subjects.	
How does it improve teaching and learning? Motivating and immediate feedback for pupils – increases confidence and motivates – helps the students to become more independent – speeds up the rate of work.	
How does the program help the teacher? Teacher can make it relevant to their specific teaching goals – it is easy for teachers to select preferences, edit lexicons and add topic-specific vocabulary.	
Content: Can the software be individualised for different learners? Yes – a major feature is the ability to edit lexicons – can adjust the rate and type of voice.	
Is the presentation of information appropriate for students with dyslexia? Yes – assists the writing process – pupils can hear and read the word simultaneously.	
Is the level of language appropriate? Yes – one can build an appropriate lexicon for a specific topic – language determined by the user.	
How difficult is it for students to work independently with the software? Pupils can work independently and can create their own written work – I found it quite difficult to operate – initially difficult but would become automatic with practice – students and teachers would need to learn how to use this program.	
Any drawbacks? Or other comments? Please continue overleaf if necessary. Excellent resource – extremely helpful for students – word prediction and speech feedback are valuable features – some input may be needed if pupil wants to use a word that isn't in 'lexicon' that he / she cannot spell – found it complicated – could be very useful in the senior section of the primary school, after training – more suited for post-primary.	

3.3 The Toolkit

The toolkit includes:

1. **Coloured markers/ chalk / pens / highlighters**
2. **Coloured paper**
3. **Coloured transparencies**
4. **A dyslexia-friendly dictionary**
5. **A magnetic board / magnetic letters**
6. **Spellcheckers**
7. **Stress ball**
8. **Triangular pencils / grips**
9. **Some materials to add to the toolkit**
10. **DVD – a comprehensive guide to using the toolkit.**

Toolkit contents (description and suppliers)

1. Coloured markers / chalk / pens / highlighters

Coloured highlight pens can draw attention to key points in a text. Pupils can use them to highlight the main information and, that way, they won't have to read the whole page again.

Highlighter pens may be used in identifying words in words or letter strings and patterns in words.

2. Coloured paper

Contact a number of local office or school suppliers for best value when ordering for your own school.

3. Coloured transparencies

Coloured transparencies may be sourced through your local school suppliers. Eye-level reading rulers are also a useful tool. These transparent rulers reduce glare, improve focus and assist tracking in reading. They are available from Crossbow Education, Brocton, Staffs. www.crossboweducation.com
Tel: 01785660902

4. Dyslexia-friendly dictionary

The ACE Spelling Dictionary is an aurally coded dictionary. As the vowel sounds are the biggest source of difficulty in the English language, it confronts these by classifying words according to the first one in each. To use the dictionary successfully, there are a few stages that need to be thoroughly understood. These are outlined in the introduction of the dictionary.

Ace Dictionary ISBN 1855032147, (Moseley D., Nicol, C.)

Available from Easons, Better Books (01384 253276) and Carrolls Education Ltd. Dublin.

5. Magnetic boards

Using magnetic boards / workbooks with letters / letter tiles in a wide variety of learning experiences and activities affords students from Junior Primary to Post-Primary classes the opportunity to use more than one learning channel. This multi-sensory learning and teaching approach supports pupils in:

- alphabet work
- phonological awareness activities
- reading and spelling words by analogy – cat, mat, rat ...
- learning spellings.

Magnetic boards / workbooks with letters / letter tiles are particularly useful for spelling work if using the **‘Make and Break’** model (Neil Mac Kay: ‘Removing Dyslexia as a Barrier to Achievement’ ISBN 190384203/4).

To use the ‘make and break’ model:

- a store of magnetic letters / letter tiles can be located on a large magnetic board / whiteboard
- pupils use their own individual magnetic boards / booklets
- pupil asks for a word and is given the necessary letters in random order to place on their board
- clap the syllables several times and say it while clapping.

Then **‘Make and Break’**

1. Make the word using all the letters.
2. Break the word into syllables.
3. Make the word and sound out the syllables.
4. Break the word by jumbling up the letters.
5. Make the word saying the letter names.

Repeat stages 1 – 5 as appropriate / necessary and then proceed to a conventional method of learning spellings for example – Say, Look, Cover, Write and Check.

Suppliers

Pupil Magnetic Whiteboard (roughly A4 Size), available from In-Class Educational – Phone +353 1 6014 766, LDA, and Early Learning Centres.

Magnetic Workbook (spiral bound magnetic folder LLD1280 – LDA), available from Carroll Educational Supplies Ltd – Phone +353 1 612 0860.

Magnetic Letter Tiles, available from LDA, Phone +441223357788.

Magnetic Upper and Lower Case Plastic Letters, available from Early Learning Centres.

Magnetic Wooden Letters, available from LDA, Phone +441223357788.

6. Spellcheckers

There are many spellcheckers available. One example is the Franklin Spellchecker. This is a portable dictionary and thesaurus containing complete definitions for over 200,000 words, phrases and definitions, along with 800,000 synonyms and a phonetic spellchecker. The portable dictionary and thesaurus might be useful to most students. However, it is of particular use for those with difficulties arising from dyslexia.

7. Stress balls

Writing can be a physically strenuous exercise for many pupils. Stress balls can help to reduce muscular tension in hands and arms.

8. Triangular pens / grips

These are very useful aids for pupils who tire easily from writing. They also can help improve writing style and presentation. They are available from most well-known school supply companies.

9. Some materials to add to the toolkit

- Alphabet strips
- coloured paper / notebooks / exercise books
- flip books
- keyword displays / notebooks / word mats
- mirrors
- phonix links
- sandpaper / wooden letters
- speaking spellchecker
- reading pens
- talking books / workbooks / walkman head set
- tracing paper.

10. DVD – a comprehensive guide to using the toolkit

(See inside cover).

3.4. Support Booklets

(Note – the Support Booklet section has been placed in printer's pairs, so that they can be photocopied and folded as booklets).

6. Reassure your child that many pupils may find their first days daunting, so try to be supportive until they settle in and adjust.
7. Watch for signs of anxiety and allow opportunities to discuss without over reacting.
8. Check that your child is eating during the day and getting to bed reasonably early.
9. Make an appointment with the appropriate teacher, if you are worried about something that is happening.

Homework

- Talk your child through their homework routine before they start.
- Help them to decide what they will do, in what order and when they will need to complete their homework.
- Check in with them every 15 / 20 minutes to see how things are going.
- At the end, talk through their preparations for the following day, using the timetable.
- Check if there are any notes etc. from school.

Praise and express pride in you son's / daughter's efforts.



Moving to a Post-Primary School: A Parent's Booklet

Some helpful suggestions on how to help your child
prepare for his / her new school



Transfer from primary to post-primary can be a difficult transition for many pupils. It can be more so for pupils with dyslexia. There are many ways you can help ease this transition.

At the beginning of the year, before your child leaves primary school, consider which post-primary school would meet your child's needs. Make contact and ask to meet the Head, Principal or their deputies.

- Bring copies of any reports.
- List the important information about your child.
- Find out if there is an open day / night and if it is possible to take your child with you.

Ask for information about school

Example of questions:

1. What option subjects are available?
2. Is it necessary to take a second or third language as an option?
3. Is there a good range of practical subjects available?
4. Is there access for all pupils to a guidance counsellor?
5. What extra provision or support will be available for your child? How will it be organised?
6. How aware are the subject teachers of dyslexia?
7. Extra curricular activities: what is available?
8. If streaming or setting is used in the school to organise teaching groups, how is this done?
9. Is there help available at entrance assessment?
10. If the child has very good maths ability and weaker verbal skills, will it be possible to do higher level maths?
11. If the pupil has difficulty in taking legible and complete notes in class, could photocopies be made available?
12. Does the school provide any alternative programmes?

Questions taken from 'Understanding Dyslexia – a Guide for Schools'.
A CD-ROM produced by a joint initiative of the Departments of Education, North and South.

Talk to your child and decide on what is best.

Try to trust your decisions; you are doing your best.

Ask for an appointment early to enrol your son or daughter.

Summer holidays

- Plan how your child is going to get to and from school. Talk it through, and if possible, walk / travel the routes which are available.
- Help your child to explore and anticipate the changes, such as larger numbers, getting lost and making new friends.
- Talk to your child about their talents, strengths and areas they may be anxious about for the next year.
- Help them think about extra-curricular activities they may wish to start.
- Help them to memorise the name of their year head and / or resource teacher. If possible let them meet with the teacher before they start.
- Have all the necessary uniform and equipment bought and named in good time.

September

1. There will be an increase in the number and size of books and equipment. Help organise books, put the bigger books at the back of the bag, near their back.
2. Help to colour code, label and organise books by using timetable. Put their name on each book.
3. Write in teacher's name, by subject, on timetable and practise reading this with your child. If they cannot remember the names, enlist the help of a friend.
4. Prepare and practise checklist and update regularly, where necessary.
5. Your child may initially show signs of tiredness due to differences in routines, this is common and need not be a source of worry.

Spelling

Correct spelling helps improve your work.

Spellings may divide into:

Proper nouns and terms

- Names
- Titles of books
- Place names
- battles in History
- key words in Science

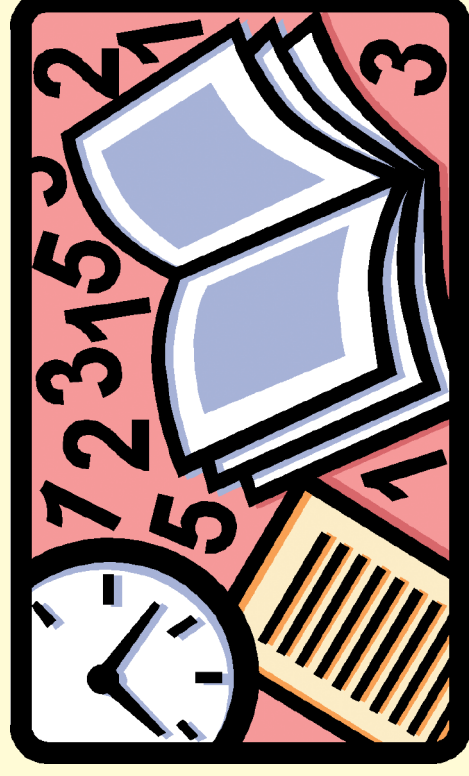
Everyday words

There, their, could, should, of, and, for, when, where, what, these, that.

Ways of improving your spelling

- Use clues and tips – thinking of your own clues
- Personal dictionary – write words on different pages
- Using A.B.C.
- Under subject headings.
- Words you use a lot.
- A way to learning spellings
Look at it, Say it, Cover it, and Write it, Check if it is right.
- Check spellings two letters by two letters.
- A spellchecker will help.

Moving to a Post-Primary School: A Pupil's Booklet



Suggestions for your new school – read them through with an adult.

What will be different?

- Different teachers for different subjects.
- You will change classrooms for some subjects.
- You may have a locker (with key or code) to keep some books.

Self-help tips

- Pick a colour for each subject.
- Make a simple map and colour each classroom in the colour you have chosen for the subject taught there.
- Stay close to your class / friends.
- Think about making new friends.
- If you get lost ask for help from a friend, or go to the secretary's office.
- Get your timetable and colour the subjects in your chosen colours.
- You will have more books and equipment.
Make a check list for each day.

How do you know points are important?

- Teacher repeats a fact.
- Something is written on the blackboard.
- Teacher spells a word.
- Teacher says that it is important.

Notes will help you with:

1. Homework
2. Revision before tests.

Self-help tips

- New page for every topic or subject.
- Write down 'key' words.
- Be brief.
- Draw and label diagrams.
- Use abbreviations.
- Try to spell important words correctly.
- Ask questions if you do not understand.
- Number your pages.
- Use a highlighter for important points.
- Keep notes in coloured folders (the same colours as you have chosen for each subject).
- Make sure the notes are in order.
- Follow the textbook during class.

Prepare yourself for each class – each day!

- Have all the textbooks and paper / pencils you need for that class.
- Clear everything else off the desk into your bag.
- Settle quickly.
- Listen carefully.
- Pick out the important points.
- Note them down, or use a mind-map.

Taking notes during lessons can help you to:

- concentrate
- understand
- put the ideas into your own words
- revise.

Using your timetable

- Take time to read and understand (ask for help).
- Colour code your subjects.
- Write the teacher's name by the subject on the timetable.
- Make a copy of your timetable for use at home.
- Cover your texts and books in the colours as you have picked for each subject.
- Decide which books need to be left in your locker and which you need to take home for each day – use homework journal to help.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
English	Maths	Science	English	Art
Geography	History	Science	Maths	Art
History	Geography	English	French	Maths
R.E.	English	R.E.	French	Maths

Get ready for the next day

Use a checklist.

Pack your bag every night.

Diary / journal	Sharpener	Spellchecker
Personal Dictionary	Pens	
Pencils	Books	
Ruler	Textbooks	
Rubber	Calculator	

Pack your subject text and books; use your timetable to know what to pack.

Store all school books in one place at home.

Homework

- It is important you record the homework; ask a friend if you miss it.
- Listen carefully to how to record homework.
- Ask, if you do not understand.
- Write it on the day it is set, write when it is due and tick it when done.
- Homework may involve
 1. Reading
 2. Learning facts
 3. Researching information
 4. Doing written work.
- Find a quiet place, no television or other distractions.
- Have everything you need before beginning.
- Make a study planner to know the time for finishing each part of the homework.
- Take short breaks, for example, 5 minutes every 30 minutes.
- To end, check your timetable and pack your bag ready for the next day.

Tips for Teachers of Pupils with Dyslexia in Post-Primary Schools



Transition from primary to post-primary is particularly worrying for pupils and parents of a child with dyslexia.

- It will take the child longer to adjust to moving round the school and to find where they should be at any particular time.
- They may be embarrassed by their literacy and numeric skills, poor memory and lack of organisation.
- They may be worried that new teachers are not aware of their problems and think they are stupid.

General principles

- Work with the pupil in the development of strategies to help her / him to overcome or cope with dyslexic difficulties.
- Accept that everyone learns differently, and recognise each pupil's learning difference. Be aware of different learning styles and be flexible in your teaching style.
- Foster positive self-esteem in the pupil. Give genuine praise whenever possible; promote activities that yield success.
- Identify pupil's strengths and learning styles to facilitate optimum learning.

Memory

- Avoid unnecessary rote learning.
- Teach efficient strategies to support memory, for example, headings / rehearsal / sequencing.
- Give direct, explicit instructions to increase chance of retention, recall and understanding.

Learning

- Link previous knowledge with new information.
- Break down learning into small sequential steps.
- Provide written or oral summary at end of lesson.

Behaviour

- Build confidence and self-esteem through the development of areas of strength or interests.
- Make sure goals are clear and accessible.
- Be constructive and positive to maintain motivation.
- Encourage positive self-evaluation.
- Reward effort as well as success.

For more information see 'Understanding Dyslexia, A Guide for Schools' produced by a joint initiative of the Departments of Education North and South.

Spelling

- Use a multi-sensory approach: Look / Say / Trace / Cover / Write / Check.
- Develop subject-specific lists in a personal workbook / dictionary.
- Subject-specific words should be taught in context.
- Present spellings in different formats to provide interest and motivation (mnemonics/ pictures etc.).
- Use games to reinforce and motivate, where appropriate.
- Encourage and help pupils to use dictionaries, thesauri, spell checkers and encyclopaedias.
- Do not over correct spelling so content is lost.

Writing

- Avoid lengthy copying and dictation. Provide photocopies where possible.
- Encourage pupils to proofread written work.
- Train pupils to plan written work using headings and sub-headings ahead of time.
- Mind mapping is an effective way to plan, extend and revise written work.
- Teach simple steps in sequencing written work appropriate to subject.

Classroom management

- Equipment should be labelled and a list given to child, this will give time for child to practise decoding words.
- Key words / subject-related words could be displayed, or give a list for each subject for child to practise at home.
- Worksheets should be simple, with large print and clear spacing.
- Listening activities need to be interspersed with 'doing' activities.
- Build up a bank of resources for the pupil. This will not be your last pupil with dyslexia, and you will be more prepared for the next one.
- Employ visual and oral stimuli in the classroom environment.
- Provide opportunities for individual, small-group and whole-class work.
- Outline content of lesson at outset and summarise at end. List out the main learning points orally, or in written form.
- If notes must be taken by pupils from board try one or all of these approaches to board work:
 1. Clear script
 2. Different coloured chalk / pen for different sections
 3. Numbered lines at each end
 4. List bullet points at the beginning of the lesson, giving time for child to copy them.

- Photocopied summary notes are useful. Hand out at end, so pupils listen rather than try to read as you speak. Try to include a task such as cloze procedure or highlighting activity.
- Have pupil sitting near you to avoid distraction and offer discreet help.
- Have large timetable displayed in form room and encourage pupil to refer to it to identify items that they need to bring.
- Hand out revision sheets well before exams and make sure pupil has full set.
- Make use of fact that the humorous / 'ridiculous' is retained in the brain better than anything else.
- Encourage word processing.
- Encourage cursive writing.

Organisational skills

- Encourage use of personal notebooks and personal checklists to remind pupil of equipment needed each day.
- Encourage use of registration times to make sure pupil has all necessary equipment.
- Draw attention to displayed class timetable.
- Encourage colour coding to identify books / texts.

Whole-school issues

- Pupils should know that there is somewhere they can go for help and advice. If possible, give them a name, place and time slots to contact teacher or senior pupil for help. Building a trust relationship is important.
- Short breaks may be needed in exams.
- Be aware of regulations for external assessment / examination concessions and special arrangements.

Strategies

Reading

- Do not ask pupil to read aloud, unless he volunteers or is given time for preparation.
- Simplify language and reduce unnecessary information in worksheets.
- Provide alternatives for written text where possible.
- Highlight difficult words in text.
- Ask child to read passage the night before so they are not meeting it for the first time in class.

Steering Committee – SEN Cross-Border Professional Exchange Programme

John Hunter, Department of Education, Northern Ireland

Breandán Ó Murchú, Department of Education and Science

Susan Carnson, Department of Education, Northern Ireland

Jimmy Malone, Department of Education and Science (to January 2005)

Carmel Reilly, Department of Education and Science (to June 2005)

Niall McLoughlin, Department of Education and Science

Siobhán Fields, Department of Education and Science

Michael Travers, Department of Education and Science

Marina Ní Threasaigh, Department of Education and Science

Joan Crowley O'Sullivan, Special Education Support Service

Seamus McDermott, Monaghan Education Centre

Joan Walshe, National Educational Psychological Service

Maureen Costello, National Educational Psychological Service

Linda Shields, Educational Psychologist, Southern Education and Library Board

Eugene Toolan, St Angela's College, Sligo

Stuart Rooney, Psychological Services, Southern Education and Library Board
(to February 2005)

Resources and Suppliers of Software Supporting Dyslexia

Title	Suitable for	Description	Suppliers North and South (not all listed)
Phoneme Track	Primary KS 1 - 2	For pupils who have difficulty memorising spellings.	Granada Learning Ltd. 0161 827 2927 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskcovery +353 1 806 3910
Wordbar	Primary Post-Primary KS 2 - 4	Grids of words, which sit alongside word processor. Users can see and hear words they wish to use.	iANSYST – Ltd 0800 018 0045 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskcovery +353 1 806 3910
Kidspiration	Primary Post-Primary KS 2 - 4	Graphic organiser to combine pictures and text to represent thoughts and words.	iANSYST – Ltd 0800 018 0045 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskcovery +353 1 806 3910
Literacy Activity Builder	Primary Post-Primary KS 1 - 3	Helps to create interactive literacy activities using nine activity frameworks.	Granada Learning Ltd. 0161 827 2927
Young Writers Workshop	Primary KS 2	Helps to create factual and creative writing skills in a stimulating environment.	iANSYST – Ltd 0800 018 0045 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 EdTech Software Ltd. 1850 923 459 Gael Linn +353 1 6751200
Dyslexia Screener	Primary Post-Primary KS 2- 4	Evaluates non-verbal reasoning, phonological processing, spelling, speed of information processing, reading and vocabulary.	Granada Learning Ltd. 0161 827 2927 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskcovery +353 1 806 3910

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Penfriend XP	Primary Post-Primary KS 2 - 4	Speech feedback and predictive text. Supports independent working and improves accuracy and vocabulary of written work.	AVP - 01291 625439 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskcovery +353 1 806 3910 iANSYST – Ltd 0800 018 0045
Read & Write	Primary Post-Primary KS 1-4	Provides speech and spelling tools needed to read, compose and proofread written material. Promotes independent working and improves accuracy and vocabulary of written work.	iANSYST Ltd 0800 018-0045 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskcovery +353 1 806 3910
Word Shark	Primary Post-Primary (Junior Certificate) KS 1 - 3	36 different games which use sound, graphics and text to reinforce word recognition and spelling. Facility for creating own word lists and tailoring to pupil's needs.	AVP 01 291 625439 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskcovery +353 1 806 3910 Carroll Education Ltd. +353 1 6120860 EdTech Software Ltd. 1850 923 459
Numbershark	Primary Post-Primary (Junior Certificate) KS 1 - 3	30 different games covering addition, subtraction, multiplication & division which add meaning and understanding to these operations – lots of rote practice.	AVP 01 291 625439 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Carroll Education Ltd. +353 1 6120860 EdTech Software Ltd. 1850 923 459
Spellmate	Primary KS 1 & 2	Pupils enter own lists and then choose one of the four games to help them practise and learn correct spellings. Teachers are provided with feedback.	AVP 01 291 625439 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskcovery +353 1 806 3910

Title	Suitable for	Description	Suppliers North and South (not all listed)
Lexia Basic Reading	Primary Post-Primary KS 1 - 5	Interactive, phonic-based activities, which reinforce sound-symbol correspondence and automatic word recognition. Exercises branch automatically depending on pupil's performance, providing practice on areas of specific difficulty.	Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910 Lexia Learning Systems Inc. 01 969 640364 EdTech Software Ltd. 1850 923 459
Harberton Reading Programme	Primary pupils who have been unable to learn to read using commercially produced reading materials	Structured programme with a limited vocabulary. Aims to build strong foundations with strategies to tackle unknown words.	www.harbertonschool.co.uk
Wellington Square CD-ROMs	Primary KS 2 & 3	Over 250 activities including talking books, phonic and sequencing exercises.	School Box. Ref: http://c2kschoolbox.granada-learning.com/special_index.html AVP – 01 291 625439 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910
TextThing	Primary Post-Primary KS 1 - 4	Creates nine text-based, multi-sensory reading and literacy activities, for pupils of all abilities, with any piece of text you import. You can also choose from the selection of 100 texts supplied.	AVP – 01291 625439 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910

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Writing with Symbols	Primary Post-Primary KS 1 -3	Provides symbol support in writing and communication. Includes talking word processor with pictorial spellchecker, symbol-supported word processor, grids for writing and grids for printing.	Widgit Software Ltd www.widgit.com +44 (0) 1223 425 558 Schoolbox. Ref: http://c2kschoolbox.granada-learning.com/special_index.html Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910
Clicker	Primary KS 1 & 2	A writing support which provides on-screen word banks and speech. Can be used across the curriculum.	iANSYST – Ltd 0800 018 0045 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910 EdTech Software Ltd. 1850 923 459
AcceleRead AcceleWrite	Primary Post-Primary KS 1 – 3	Using computer speech-to-text software to improve reading and writing skills through structured phonic exercises.	iANSYST – Ltd 0800 018 0045 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910
Speedy Keys Typing Tutor	Primary KS 1 - 3	Promotes keyboard awareness and spelling.	iANSYST – Ltd 0800 018 0045 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910
Catch Up CD1 and CD2	Primary KS 1 - 3	Interactive activities to support reading intervention programmes.	iANSYST – Ltd 0800 018 0045 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910
Word Track	Primary Post-Primary KS 2 & 3	For pupils who have difficulty memorising spellings.	Granada Learning Ltd. 0161 827 2927 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910

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Eye Track	Primary Post-Primary KS 1 - 3	Helps improve and develop areas of visual perception.	Granada Learning Ltd. 0161 827 2927 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910
Alphabet Track	Primary KS 1 & 2	Provides opportunities to reinforce alphabet awareness	Granada Learning Ltd. 0161 827 2927 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910
Spell Track	Primary KS 1 & 2	Supports consistent and accurate spellings.	Granada Learning Ltd. 0161 827 2927 Andrews Award Systems +353 1 493 0011 Diskovery +353 1 806 3910

